

Game begins for tennis centre

Melanie Christiansen

QUEENSLAND is a step closer to getting back on the international tennis circuit after work began yesterday on the State Tennis Centre.

The \$77 million centre will be built as part of a commercial and residential development on the site of the old Tennyson power station in Brisbane's southwest.

The complex will feature 23 international standard courts, including three grand slam surfaces — grass, clay and acrylic



Peter Beattie

— with a centre court able to seat up to 5500 people.

It is due to be ready by the end of next year, in time to host a planned combined Australian men's and women's hardcourt championships in January 2009.

That would be the first major international tournament in Queensland since the demise of the Milton courts in 1999.

"This will be a fantastic shot

in the arm for tennis," said Tennis Queensland CEO Stephen Ayles.

"People in Queensland and Brisbane haven't seen first-class events on an annual basis for many many years."

Turning the first sod yesterday, Premier Peter Beattie said the State Tennis Centre would allow Queensland to compete for major tournaments.

It also would provide a headquarters for Tennis Queensland and the Queensland Academy of Sport's tennis program.

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